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DE RUEHKG #0989/01 3261906
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 211906Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6980
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0531
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 2344

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 000989

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/20/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [ASEC](#) [SNAR](#) [SOCI](#) [KCOR](#) [JM](#) [XL](#)
SUBJECT: CARIBBEAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR DISCUSSES CRIME AND
CORRUPTION WITH GOJ OFFICIALS IN KINGSTON

Classified By: CDA James Heg for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: WHA Director for Caribbean Affairs Velia De Pirro visited Kingston October 29-31. Crime and corruption colored every discussion between Jamaican interlocutors and De Pirro. In meetings with Jamaican officials and Canadian and British diplomats, she affirmed the U.S. commitment to work cooperatively with Jamaica and partners in the region to strengthen security. Her interlocutors welcomed the U.S. intention, announced by Secretary Rice in September, to engage in a regional dialogue on security issues. In meetings with Foreign Ministry officials, De Pirro encouraged Jamaica to review its votes on human rights resolutions in the UN Third Committee, urging that Jamaica oppose &no action8 motions and support resolutions on Iran, Burma and North Korea. Jamaican officials, particularly the Ministers of National Security and Justice, highlighted the threat posed to Jamaica,s progress and stability by rampant crime and corruption. They reviewed steps being taken by the government of Prime Minister Bruce Golding to deal with this phenomenon. Canadian High Commissioner Dennis Kingsley briefed on Canada,s C\$17 million judicial reform program and its work with the police and Ministry of National Security. Representatives from human rights organizations reported good cooperation with government officials, but cited continued problems with violence directed toward vulnerable populations. De Pirro also participated in a roundtable with Jamaican media. End summary.

Crime and Corruption

¶2. (C) During an October 29-31 trip to Kingston, Office Director of Caribbean Affairs Velia De Pirro met with the Ministers of National Security and Justice, representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFAFT) and Investment, Industry and Commerce, and with the Commissioner of Police. The threat posed to Jamaica,s economic and political stability by rampant crime and corruption colored almost every discussion during De Pirro,s visit. Most interlocutors blamed increased drug and arms trafficking for the rise in violence. They generally viewed PM Golding as sincere in his effort to tackle the problem, but questioned whether Jamaica,s politicians were ready to leave partisanship aside to agree on tough solutions. Police Commissioner Hardley Lewin, who provided the most dour assessment of the situation, complained that the government lacked statesmen, that gangs previously controlled by political parties were now in control, and that the police was politicized. Lewin speculated that perhaps the Jamaicans had not suffered enough to fight for change and demand improvements. He advocated a multi-dimensional approach to fighting crime, one that links good policing to social intervention and economic growth programs.

¶3. (C) Minister of National Security Trevor Macmillan told

De Pirro that the government had prioritized the recommendations of the Police Strategic Review, which outlined the challenges. The government will first focus on upgrading police training at the academy, then modify the hiring and discipline practices within the Jamaican Constabulary Force. To address the latter, the GOJ already has hired a consultant. Justice Minister Dorothy Lightbourne told De Pirro the GOJ will proceed with legislation, for which she believes there is enough support, to establish an Anti-Corruption Special Prosecutor. Lightbourne sought assistance on the design of the office, staff hiring guidelines, and information on how to set up and run prosecutions. She hoped U.S. counterparts could provide insight since the USG has experience with Special Prosecutors.

¶4. (SBU) In a private meeting with De Pirro, Canadian High Commissioner Denis Kingsley and Deputy British High Commissioner Graham Glover expressed concern about the levels of crime and corruption in Jamaica. Kingsley said that Canada plans to provide some C\$17 million for judicial reform to Jamaica. The funding is to be administered by the Canadian Justice Ministry rather than CIDA. The wide-ranging program will include a review of existing legislation, assistance on drafting new legislation, judicial training for judges and prosecutors, and forensic training for the Jamaican Constabulary Force, as well as other assistance. Canada hopes that the European Union will engage on administrative and criminal law issues. Though the Canadian initiative has been slow to get off the ground, awaiting final approval in Ottawa, Kingsley said that an initial one and a half million Canadian dollars has been provided to the Ministries of National Security and of Justice. Glover

expressed hope that with the international community more cohesive and a relatively new JLP government in power, changes would be made. He worried, though, that Prime Minister Golding alone could not push through anti-corruption measures. Nevertheless, he attributed the bulk of problems to a lack of capacity rather than to any absence of political will to address crime and corruption.

Jamaica Open to Greater Caribbean Dialogue on Security Issues

¶5. (C) De Pirro briefed on the U.S. proposal for a U.S.-Caribbean Regional Security Dialogue with CARICOM members, the Dominican Republic, and partners UK, France, Canada, and the Netherlands. She highlighted the cooperative approach the United States was taking by basing its proposal on the ongoing security dialogue within CARICOM. De Pirro encouraged high-level attendance at the U.S.-Caribbean Security Dialogue Conference to be hosted by WHA Assistant Secretary Shannon in Washington, DC December 8-9. (Note: On November 15, CARICOM requested a postponement of the meeting. End note.) Jamaican interlocutors welcomed the conference. Minister of National Security Trevor MacMillan, who planned to attend, highlighted trafficking in illicit weapons as a priority for discussion. He blamed the significant increase in the arms for ganja trade between the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Jamaica for fueling crime and violence in inner-city communities. In a separate meeting, Police Commissioner Hardley Lewin welcomed increased dialogue on security, but warned that the United States and donors should heed the priorities laid out by Caribbean states, rather than present them with a pre-conceived plan. De Pirro stressed that the U.S. proposal was for a dialogue that would eventually yield a mutually agreed set of priorities and solutions. Lewin said that while the United States views the Caribbean as a unitary region, a single template cannot meet the varied needs based on the geographic and political landscapes of the countries involved. He hoped to see a good deal of flexibility in any proposals resulting from the dialogue so that each island can tailor a program to its unique characteristics. Lewin was particularly concerned that given Jamaica's geographic isolation from its neighbors, it not be left out of the planning process.

Jamaica,s Foreign Relations

¶6. (C) Courtney Rattray, Director of Bilateral Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAFT), noted Jamaica,s efforts to strengthen regional cooperation. He said that Jamaica is establishing a permanent diplomatic Mission in Haiti, which will be co-located with the Barbadian embassy in Port-au-Prince until it can open its own fully staffed facility. (Bio Note: Rattray departs December 6 to take up the post of Jamaican Ambassador in Beijing. End note.) In a separate meeting, Jamaican Commissioner of Police Hardley Lewin told De Pirro that he has made arrangements for five Jamaican Constabulary Force officers to join MINUSTAH in Haiti, and that when the Jamaican mission opens, it will include a Police Liaison Officer. Lewin said he is amenable to working through NAS to facilitate additional contacts with the Haitian National Police and officers in the Dominican Republic.

¶7. (SBU) Paul Robotham, MFAFT Under Secretary for Bilateral and Regional Affairs and Jamaica,s National Coordinator for the Summit of the Americas (SOA), sought U.S. support for language in the SOA Draft Communique. He said that since the SOA is being held in Trinidad and Tobago, it has a &Caribbean flavor,8 and the theme of promoting human prosperity is particularly relevant to the concerns of small island nations. He welcomed U.S. sensitivity to these concerns, as evidenced by the USD 5 million to be provided to Jamaica for hurricane recovery. De Pirro encouraged Robotham to reach out to U.S. Summit Coordinator and Permanent Representative to the OAS Hector Morales, noting that the U.S. is committed to a successful SOA and seeks to work cooperatively on a meaningful Draft Declaration.

Economic Partnerships for Jamaica

¶8. (C) Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ronald Robinson welcomed Jamaica,s inclusion in the U.S.-Brazil bio-fuels initiative, which he hoped would revitalize the sugar cane industry in Jamaica. In response to De Pirro,s questions regarding steps toward economic integration among CARICOM members, Robinson said progress was being made to meet the 2015 deadline. He noted, however, that while

Jamaican ministries were working on harmonization and other technical issues, CARICOM was slow-moving &to the point of frustration.8 He warned that while Jamaica is keen to improve trade and security cooperation in the region, it would oppose any form of political union. De Pirro highlighted the U.S. interest in improved trade, economic, and security cooperation with the Caribbean, noting that the issue of political union was for Caribbean nations to decide.

¶9. (SBU) Michael Stern, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Industry, Investment, and Commerce, highlighted Jamaica,s interest in closer trade ties with the United States. As a template, he pointed to the recently concluded Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Europe. De Pirro noted the need for the harmonization of various laws, rules, and regulations to facilitate trade between the United States and CARICOM members. Stern expressed gratitude to U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gutierrez for meeting with Caribbean ministers at the second annual Americas Competitiveness Forum (ACF) in August 2008. (Emboffs delivered a letter sent by Secretary Gutierrez to the Minister.) Stern asked whether the Department of Commerce was preparing a response to the Caribbean ministers, request for a trade mission to the region. Stern told De Pirro that Prime Minister Golding had told government ministers October 29 that it was time to dispose of failing assets, a possible reference to Air Jamaica. Golding had also noted that due to falling oil prices, Jamaica should not rely on PetroCaribe.

Human Rights Concerns

¶10. (SBU) De Pirro hosted a luncheon for representatives from local NGOs Woman Inc., Jamaican Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals, and Gays (J-FLAG), Jamaicans for Justice, People's Action for Community Transformation (PACT), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). NGO activists identified lack of resources to address domestic violence and provide assistance to victims, sexual harassment and pervasive cultural norms that permitted such behavior, societal stigma and physical violence against homosexuals, and the alarming number of civilian deaths at the hands of security forces as primary concerns. The organizations reported good cooperation with government officials on a number of these issues. The focus of their work continues to be providing victims, assistance and pro bono legal aid, and to conduct grassroots advocacy and awareness-building activities. Representatives reported doing outreach in schools, sending editorials to national newspapers, and testifying at parliamentary hearings on pending legislation.

Comment

¶11. (C) The prominence of crime and corruption during discussions highlights how neuralgic the issue is for Jamaicans. The Golding government has staked a great deal on addressing these concerns, but without broad bipartisan support, it faces an uphill battle. End comment.

¶12. (U) WHA Caribbean Affairs Director De Pirro cleared this message.
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